



## PSSB Weekly Highlights

- Charlie Gilmore, Lewis & Clark Co. has been working on planning and implementation of Help Desk services for the statewide public safety radio system. He also has been implementing new security policies and assisting the Montana Highway Patrol (MHP) with console upgrades at their dispatch center.
- Roger Smith and Charlie Gilmore, both with Lewis & Clark Co., have been conducting T1 testing on the transport network and providing support for the new Richland County Public Safety Communications System Manager, Max Pangburn formerly with Mountain Communications & Paging in Bozeman. Welcome aboard, Max!
- Don't forget to set your clocks back to Standard Time this weekend. At the same time, the U.S. Fire Administration (USFA) encourages you to test your home smoke alarms and replace batteries if they are more than a year old.

## State Agency Radio Users Task Force

The State Agency Radio Users Task Force met Tues., Oct. 25 to discuss future priorities for state agencies. After reviewing task items, Lou Antonick, General Services, facilitated the discussion. The group has agreed that state agencies need to have a collective voice.

Several tactical issues were brainstormed, including the fact that some agencies still have equipment that needs to be replaced so it can meet the narrowband mandate. Others still need additional trunking radios. Members indicated that a more structured approach for obtaining inter-agency technical assistance is needed as well as more planning for expanded data communications. Identifying procedures for agency-to-agency surplus of radio equipment also was listed as a tactical issue.

The need for additional radio technicians was a recurring theme. Since technicians are a shared need, a strategy might be to have state agencies share expenses for them. The task force is interested in identifying other possible opportunities to split costs or assist each other with established programs.

Several long-range issues also were identified and included such items as lifecycle planning for equipment replacement, Operations & Maintenance (O&M) expenses, compliance, setting standards, and looking for additional opportunities for collective purchasing. It was agreed that the group's goal should be on seeking support for public safety in general, not necessarily for individual state agencies.

The next meeting will be held the fifth week of Nov.—on Nov. 29—rather than the fourth, to avoid the week of Thanksgiving. It will run from 3:00 to 4:30 pm in Room 105 of the Old Livestock Building, 125 E. Lockey Ave., in Helena. The focus of the meeting will be on identifying opportunities to share costs and resources as well as agency support for large-scale state incident response. The group also voted to cancel the Dec. meeting.



**Richland Co. Max Pangburn, Communications Coordinator, Roger Smith, Lewis & Clark Co., and Denny Palmer, Richland Co. Undersheriff, are dwarfed by the 180-foot tower at the new Antelope Butte communications site.**

## COMT Class Comes to Montana

Representatives from Disaster and Emergency Services (DES), Lewis and Clark and Missoula Counties, Montana Highway Patrol, Montana and Oklahoma National Guard and the Montana Dept. of Health and Human Services, attended the All-Hazards Communications Technician (COMT) training session that was presented for the first time in Montana Oct. 17-21.

This course, which was sponsored by the Office of Emergency Communications Interoperable Communications Technical Assistance Program (OEC/ICTAP), trains emergency responders on

# HEARD ACROSS MONTANA

practices and procedures common to radio communication technicians during emergency operations. It will be offered again in Montana Feb. 13-17, 2012, so save the dates!



(Photo by Dale Osborne, MHP)

## Emergency Alert System Nationwide Test

On Nov. 9, 2011 at 12:00 pm, MST, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and Federal Communications Commission (FCC) will conduct the first ever, top-to-bottom nationwide test of the Emergency Alert System (EAS). At that time, an announcement will come on every TV and radio channel indicating that EAS has been activated. This is only a test. Please do not be alarmed when you see this message.

What is the EAS? EAS alerts are sent over the radio or television (broadcast, cable and satellite). State and local emergency managers use these alerts to notify the public about emergencies and weather events, such as tornadoes and hurricanes. The EAS can also be used to send an alert across the United States if a national emergency were to occur.

It is common for state and local EAS tests to take place on a weekly or monthly basis, but a national activation of the system on **all** broadcast, cable and satellite radio and television systems at the same time has never been conducted. The Nov. 9 test will help ensure that the EAS will work if public safety officials ever need to send an alert or warning to the entire country or to a large region of the United States.

The EAS code for national emergencies will be transmitted next Wed. and will be re-broadcasted by broadcast stations and other service providers until it has been distributed throughout the country and U.S. territories. No action will need to be taken.

What will be different about this EAS test? The nationwide EAS test on Nov. 9 may be similar to other EAS tests that you have seen. Such tests include an audio EAS tone and a message indicating that "This is a test of the Emergency Alert System." The nationwide EAS test will last a little longer—about three minutes.

In addition, due to technical limitations, a visual message indicating that "This is a test" may not appear on every television channel, especially among cable subscribers. For these reasons, the FCC and FEMA are taking extra steps to educate the public, especially persons with hearing disabilities, that this is only a test.

Additional information regarding the national test may be found at: <http://www.fcc.gov/pshs>.

## Upcoming Meetings

- **Wed., Nov. 9: Regional Broadband Meeting**  
*In partnership with: Headwaters Resource Conservation & Development*  
Butte • 10:00 am - 2:00 pm  
La Quinta Inn, 1 Holiday Way
- **Thurs., Nov. 10: Regional Broadband Meeting**  
*In partnership with: Gallatin & Park Counties*  
Bozeman • 1:00 - 5:00 pm  
Gallatin County Courthouse, 311 West Main St.  
For more info.: <http://broadband.mt.gov/events.aspx>
- **Tues., Nov. 15: Advanced Crisis Communications Strategies for Public Safety Communications Supervisors**  
Helena • 8:30 am - 4:30 pm  
Lewis and Clark County Emergency Operations Center  
221 Breckenridge St. - RSVP: Paul Spengler, 447-8285  
[pspengler@co.lewis-clark.mt.us](mailto:pspengler@co.lewis-clark.mt.us) by Nov. 4
- **Wed-Thurs., Nov. 16-17: ICS-400 – Advanced Incident Command System**  
Fort Harrison • 8:00 am - 5:00 pm  
Regional Training Institute (RTI), Rm. 14, 1956 Mt. Majors St.  
Prerequisites: ICS-100, ICS-200 & ICS 300  
Register here: <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/ICS400-Register>  
Contact: David Vaught, [dvaught@mt.gov](mailto:dvaught@mt.gov), or 406-444-0354
- **Wed-Thurs., Nov. 16-17: Fleet Mapping Training**  
Butte • 9:00 am - 4:00 pm Both Days  
Butte-Silver Bow Law Enforcement Dept. Training Rm.  
225 Alaska St.; Roger Smith, Instructor  
*Please bring a laptop. Course is designed for personnel who will be responsible for programming digital and trunked radios.*
- **Tues., Nov. 29: State Agency Radio Users Task Force**  
Helena • 3:00 - 4:30 pm  
Old Livestock Building, 125 E. Lockey Ave., Rm. 105
- **Thurs., Dec. 1: Northern Tier Consortium**  
Havre • 10:00 am - 12:30 pm  
Hill County Detention Center Courtroom Mtg. Area  
1450 2<sup>nd</sup> St. West

## Honoring Those Who Served



Friday, Nov. 11, 2011

State Offices will  
be Closed